



CROSSGEN
COMICS

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MYSTIC™



M. Milla
Matt Milla
Crossley

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CRESS

is a world where magic dominates every aspect of daily life. For centuries, seven Guilds of magic have presided over this enchanted globe, owing much to the **Eternal Spirits** of their original Guild Masters. Living on as ethereal phantoms, each Eternal Spirit provided their Guild's current Master with timeless wisdom and sorcerous knowledge.

This ancient balance of power was shattered on the day **Genevieve Villard** was to become Master of the Nouveau Guild. At Gen's Rite of Ascension, a mysterious stranger imprinted a mystical sigil on the palm of her rebellious sister, **Giselle**. When the Sigil's power drew all seven Eternal Spirits into Giselle, a turbulent new era dawned for Cress. Granted vast magical might, Giselle Villard reluctantly became the most powerful Mystic her world has ever known!

RECENTLY:

Secretly influenced by her archenemy, **Animora**, Giselle spent several weeks of debauchery with her old friends and a detective named **Manion** before discovering that they served the Nouveau City mob boss, **Duke Abaddon**. Giselle was later cleansed of Animora's taint, but not before the Eternal Spirits unanimously decided to cut her off from their counsel and support. Now Giselle returns home to seek her sister's help, only to find that Gen has been busy in her absence...





GISELLE!
IT'S...IT'S
NOT WHAT
IT—

YES,
IT IS. IT'S
EXACTLY WHAT
IT SEEMS.

...

GEN...?

THIERRY...?



IT JUST SORT OF
HAPPENED, GISELLE.
WE NEVER MEANT TO
HURT YOU!

WHY...



WHY NOT?
I'D DESERVE
IT.

IT'S BEEN
WEEKS SINCE I
WAS MUCH OF A
GIRLFRIEND, OR
A SISTER.

GISELLE...? SOMETHING
HAPPENED TO YOU...
DIDN'T IT?

YEAH... YOU COULD SAY THAT, WHERE DO I START...?

IT ALL GOES BACK TO ANIMORA. YOU SAW HER **FORCE** ME TO DRAIN HER ENERGY WITH MY **SIGIL**. AT THE TIME, IT SEEMED LIKE SHE'D UNDERESTIMATED ME...

TURNS OUT SHE HAD HER REASONS...

WITH HER GONE, I SPENT THE NEXT FEW WEEKS PARTYING HARDER THAN I EVER HAD. I NEVER EVEN **QUESTIONED** WHY I WAS SUDDENLY ACTING LIKE A **WITCH ON WHEELS**.

THEN I CAUGHT SOMEONE FOLLOWING ME AROUND--SOMEONE FROM THE SAME PLANET OF **GOD-PEOPLE** THAT ANIMORA HERSELF CAME FROM.



I MADE HIM TAKE ME HOME WITH HIM, TO MEET THEIR **QUEEN**, A GODDESS NAMED **INGRA**. THE MINUTE I SAW HER, I PICKED A **FIGHT** WITH HER.

BIG MISTAKE. **HUGE MISTAKE.**

AFTER SHE BEAT THE SNOT OUT OF ME, **INGRA** SHOWED ME THAT I'D BEEN ANIMORA'S **PUPPET** ALL ALONG. WHEN I DREW IN ALL HER POWER, I HAD SOMEHOW PUT MYSELF UNDER HER CONTROL.

SHE'D HOPED TO USE MY **SIGIL** AS A **WEAPON** AGAINST **INGRA**.

ANOTHER BIG MISTAKE.

ANIMORA'S HEAD IS PROBABLY MOUNTED OVER **INGRA'S** FIREPLACE BY NOW...





INGRA SENT ME HOME WITH A WARNING. SHE SAYS SOME THREAT EVEN **WORSE** THAN ANIMORA IS AT WORK HERE ON CIRESS.

WHAT COULD BE WORSE THAN THE DEMON QUEEN?

SHE DIDN'T SAY.



ANY CHANCE SHE WAS JUST **LYING** TO GET YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR HER?

SURE, WHY NOT? SEEMS LIKE EVER SINCE I GOT THIS DAMN THING ON MY PALM, FOLKS HAVE BEEN LINING UP TO **USE** ME...



AND THEN YOU CAME HOME TO **US**...

I'M SO SORRY, GISELLE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO --

NO, NO, IT'S OKAY. **REALLY.** I, uh...



I ACTUALLY THINK YOU TWO ARE A BETTER **FIT.**



THIERRY, WHATEVER WE HAD WAS... WELL, I THINK I JUST REALLY LIKED ALL THE ATTENTION, BUT...

IT WASN'T A REAL TWO-WAY STREET. I DIDN'T TREAT **YOU** WELL AT ALL.

TO BE HONEST, GEN'S MORE YOUR SPEED. SHE'S, YOU KNOW... **HEALTHIER.**

SHE HASN'T GOT A HEADFUL OF **SNAKES**, LIKE ME.



ELLE...

NO, REALLY, GEN. IT'S OKAY. I'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO ON MYSELF BEFORE I CAN HAVE SOMEONE ELSE IN MY LIFE. I THINK I'M OKAY WITH THAT.



ACTUALLY, THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

I NEED YOUR HELP. THE ETERNAL SPIRITS GOT SICK OF ME ACTING LIKE AN IDIOT. THEY'VE STOPPED TALKING TO ME--NOT THAT I BLAME THEM.



I'VE BEEN WALKING AROUND FOR MONTHS WITH THE GREATEST MAGICAL MINDS EVER KNOWN INSIDE MY HEAD.

NOT ONCE DID I TAKE AN INTEREST IN WHAT THEY HAD TO TEACH ME. UNLESS IT WAS TO SAVE MY SKIN. WELL, THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE.

I HAVE TO TURN MY LIFE AROUND, GEN. I HAVE TO PROVE TO THE SPIRITS THAT I'M NOT SUCH A WASTE-CASE.



HOW?

BY LEARNING WHAT THE GUILDS ARE REALLY ALL ABOUT.

BY FINALLY MAKING AN EFFORT, AND SHOWING SOME RESPECT...

...STARTING WITH THE NOUVEAU GUILD.

GEN... WILL YOU TEACH ME?



COME
IN!



OH!
SORRY,
BOSS.

FORGET IT.
BRING HIM IN --
I'M ON A TIGHT
SCHEDULE TODAY.



DETECTIVE MANION,
I HOPE YOU
REALIZE HOW MANY
FAVORS I BURNED
TO SPRING YOU
FROM JAIL.

...DUKE...?

DUKE, YOU
HAVE TO LET
ME EXPLAIN!

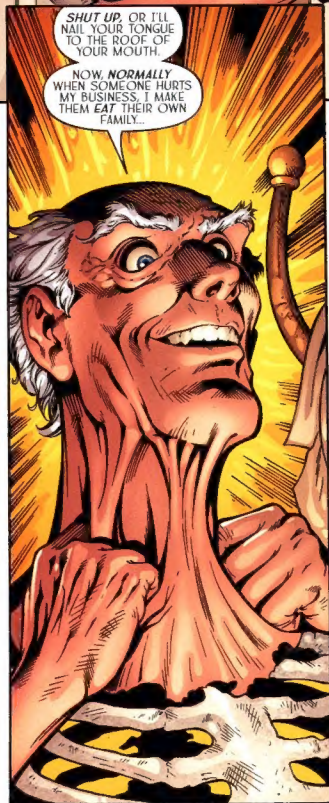


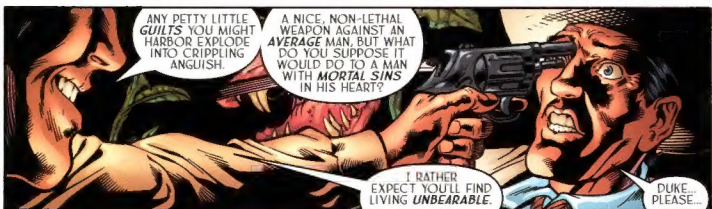
THAT GIRL
HAS MAGIC LIKE
I'VE NEVER SEEN
BEFORE!

SHE DIDN'T
EVEN BOTHER WITH
INCANTATIONS -- TORE UP
YOUR PIXIE-DUST LAB
WITHOUT BREAKING
A SWEAT!

TSK, TSK,
DETECTIVE.

I TRUSTED YOU
TO RECRUIT GISELLE
VILLARD FOR ME. I'LL
LOSE HALF A MILLION
DUCATS A YEAR WITH
THAT LAB SHUT
DOWN...







AM I REALLY SUCH AN EMBARRASSMENT THAT WE HAVE TO DO CLASS IN THE ATTIC?

VERY FUNNY. NOW LOOK, GISELLE. *THIS* IS WHAT I WANTED YOU TO SEE...

...A MAN WHO WAS NOTHING BUT **TROUBLE**. A MAN WHO **LIVED** FOR DESTRUCTION AND CONQUEST.

HE HAD A 'HEAD FULL OF SNAKES'. TOO. BUT HE WAS ABLE TO GROW PAST THAT... AND HE'S BEEN MAKING UP FOR IT EVER SINCE.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THAT MAN IS ALAIN LeCAVALIER. BEFORE HE BECAME **ETERNAL SPIRIT** OF THE NOUVEAU GUILD.

NO WAY...! *THAT* GUY LOOKS LIKE **FUN!** THE NOUVEAU SPIRIT I KNOW IS DULLER THAN DITCHWATER!

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE NOUVEAU GUILD WAS THE AGGRESSIVE UPSTART, SEIZING LAND AND POWER FROM OLDER, MORE COMPLACENT GUILDS.

ONLY WHEN OUR POWER BASE WAS CONSOLIDATED COULD WE MOVE ON TO **HIGHER PURSUITS**.



AND NOW YOU GUYS SPEND YOUR TIME CONTEMPLATING FLOWERS AND SUNSETS AND--

NO, NO
NO.



THAT'S A COMMON MISCONCEPTION

YOU ALWAYS HEAR PEOPLE SAY THAT OUR PHILOSOPHY OF MAGIC IS DEVOTED TO *BEAUTY* IN ALL ITS FORMS CLOSE BUT NOT QUITE

OTHERS THINK THAT WE DRAW OUR POWER FROM EVERYTHING THAT'S *BRIGHT* AND *GOOD*

STILL OTHERS SAY THAT OURS IS THE MAGIC OF *CREATION* ITSELF

THEY'RE ALL CORRECT AND YET THEY ALL MISS THE POINT

IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE ANCIENTS, *NOUVEAU* MEANT *NEW*, AND THAT IS WHAT WE REVERE: *INNOVATION*, *NOVELTY*, *PROGRESS*

WE CELEBRATE *CHANGE*

SKA

HAVEN'T YOU EVER WONDERED WHY OUR FASHIONS AND VEHICLES ARE DIFFERENT EVERY YEAR, WHILE FOLKS IN THE SHAMAN OR DJINN LANDS LIVE AND DRESS LIKE THEY DID A THOUSAND YEARS AGO?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT

SOME PEOPLE CRITICIZE OUR FAST LIVING THEY POINT TO OUR FADS AND SAY THAT AS A CULTURE WE HAVE THE ATTENTION SPAN OF A TWO YEAR-OLD

BUT GROWTH AND PROGRESS ARE WHERE WE FIND OUR STRENGTH

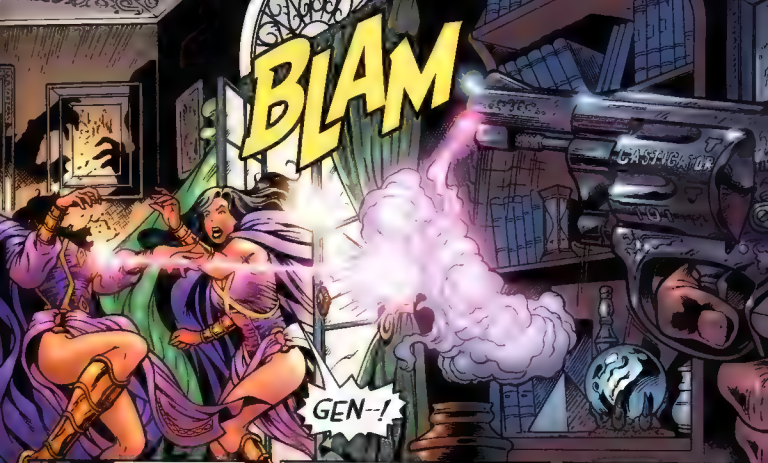
OKAY, I THINK I GET IT. THOUGH I'M NOT SURE HOW ALL OF THAT AFFECTS NOUVEAU SPELL-CASTING.

MAYBE YOU CAN EXPLAIN WHILE I FEED THE SQUIRT AND CONJURE US SOME BREAKFAST

AND WHAT ABOUT TRADITION... AND HISTORY? IF YOU'RE ALWAYS REACHING FOR WHAT'S NEW, COULDN'T YOU, Y'KNOW, LOSE YOUR ROOTS...?

IT'S A DELICATE BALANCE, TO BE SURE, BUT I HAVE FAITH THAT CHANGE IS GOOD, GISELLE

PEOPLE RESIST CHANGE ALL THE TIME, BUT THAT'S JUST FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN KEEP



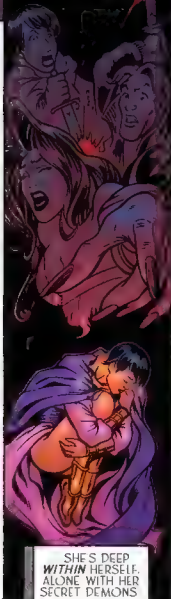
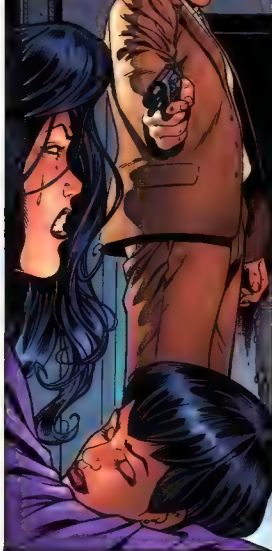
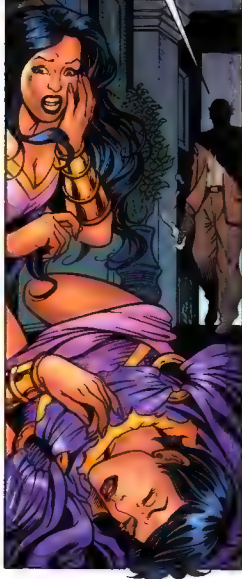
BLAM

GEN--!

DAMN I HAD HOPED
NOT TO INVOLVE THE
GUILD MASTER IN OUR
BUSINESS, GISELLE
VILLARD

TAKE SOME COMFORT
IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT
SHE WILL RECOVER
CASTIGATOR ROUNDS
DO NO PHYSICAL
DAMAGE

BUT AT THE
MOMENT



SHE'S DEEP
WITHIN HERSELF.
ALONE WITH HER
SECRET DEMONS



WHO?



IN
THE FOUR
MOONS.



...ARE
YOU?!



I AM **ABADDON**, ARCHDUKE OF
THE BRIMSTONE PLANE. I'M THE
BOSS OF BOSSES IN NOUVEAU
CITY'S DEMIMONDE, OR DON'T
YOU EVER READ THE
MORNING SCROLL?



YOU ALREADY KNOW ONE OF
MY ASSOCIATES: DETECTIVE
MANION? **FORMER ASSOCIATE**,
I SHOULD SAY

WHEN YOU
DESTROYED
THAT PIXIE-DUST
LAB MANION WAS
RUNNING, YOU SHUT
DOWN ONE OF
MY BEST PROFIT
CENTERS



I CANNOT ALLOW THAT
LOSS TO GO UNAVENGED

I SHOULD
ADVISE YOU,
BY THE WAY

NOT TO
GET TOO
ROUGH
WITH ME

WHY?





SIMPLE
PUT *THIS* TO
YOUR HEAD
AND PULL THE
TRIGGER

LIKE I SAID,
THE EFFECTS
ARE JUST
TEMPORARY

AND I'M SUPPOSED
TO JUST *TRUST* A...
WHATEVER YOU ARE...
TO LET MY FRIENDS
GO?

WHEN AN
INFERNAL DUKE
GIVES HIS *WORD*,
IT IS A *BINDING*
CONTRACT.



JUST AS I
PROMISE YOU
THEY'LL *DIE* IF
YOU DON'T PLAY
THE GAME MY WAY

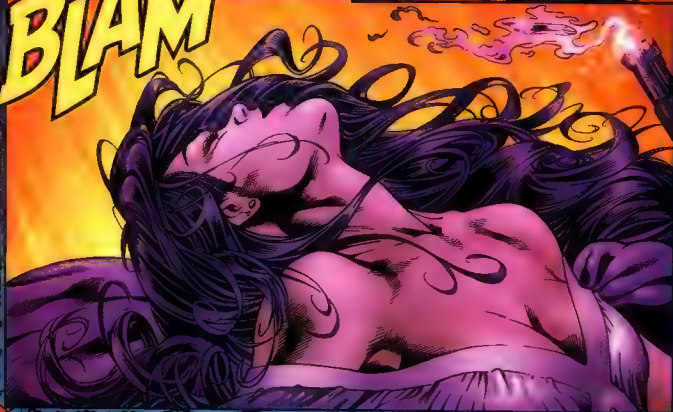


WHAT'S WRONG,
GISELLE? *AFRAID* OF
WHAT YOU MIGHT
FIND *INSIDE*
YOURSELF?

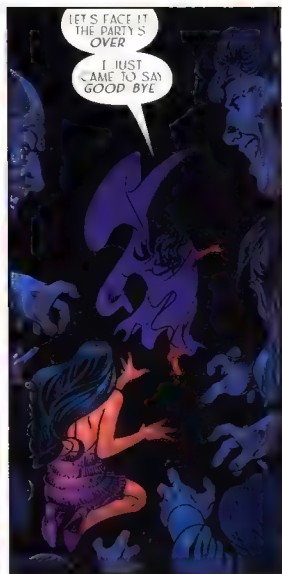
PERHAPS
YOU *SHOULD*
BE .



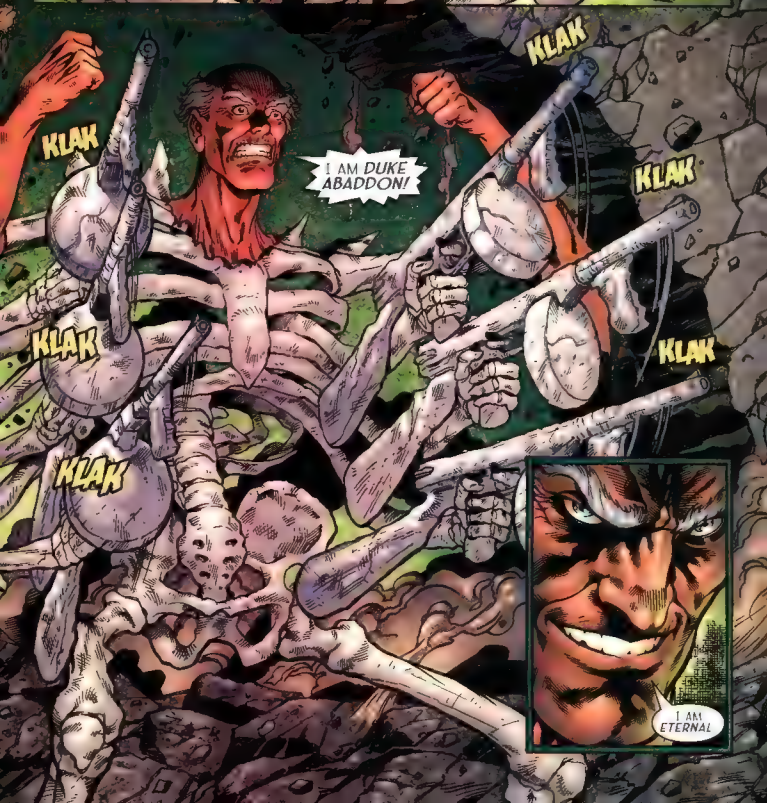
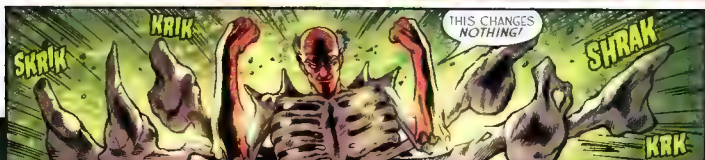
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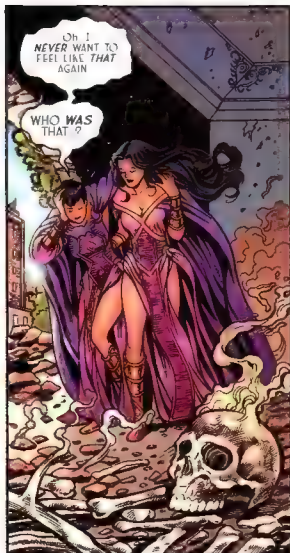






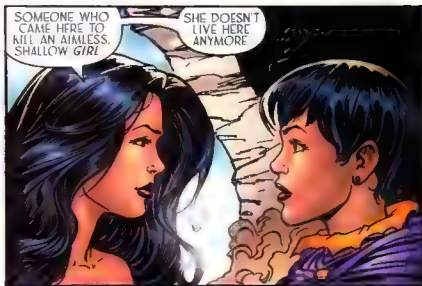






OH I NEVER WANT TO FEEL LIKE THAT AGAIN

WHO WAS THAT?



SOMEONE WHO CAME HERE TO KILL AN AIMLESS, SHALLOW GIRL

SHE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE



GEN, CAN YOU MAKE THEM NORMAL-SIZE AGAIN?

IS THAT YOUR FRIENDS---? I, uh...

...I THINK SO BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO JAIL

I KNOW I ONLY HOPE IT DOES THEM SOME GOOD



PERHAPS THERE IS STILL HOPE FOR YOU, GIRL...



ALAIN...? DOES THIS MEAN WE'RE BACK ON SPEAKING TERMS?

YES, GISELLE YOU AND I ARE

BUT I'M AFRAID THE OTHER GUILD SPIRITS DON'T BELIEVE IN YOU



THAT'S OKAY I STILL BELIEVE IN THEM.

SO WHERE SHOULD I GO FOR MY NEXT LESSON?

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MYSTIC™

ISSUE
#26

on sale
JULY 17TH



SHAMAN
SHOWDOWN!

MYSTIC

PLEASE LET US
KNOW IF YOU DON'T
WANT YOUR NAME AND
ADDRESS PRINTED. MARK
YOUR E-MAILS AS
"OKAY TO PRINT."
LETTERS MAY BE
EDITED FOR CONTENT
AND LENGTH.

MysSpellings:

MYSTIC #23 was a good issue, and it had some unexpected moments in it, although I have some reservations about Giselle's visit to Ingra. Gen and Thierry are good as a team, but I think they would work better as a couple (hint, hint). The little worm in the bottle moment was also fun. I don't mind the crossover into Ingra's realm, although I hope this will not become any more regular in the titles. The Sam/Sephie crossover was fun, and THE FIRST/MERIDIAN crossover was tolerable, but I'm hoping from now on characters stay in their own worlds.

Mr. Fiorentino is turning into a great artist, and I find myself liking his art more and more every time I see it. I especially liked his portrayal of Ingra: very nice. The inks and colors were also well done. I had some reservations about Mr. Crossley continuing with an artist whose work is so dark, but he has done his job very well. Bravo! Keep up the good work.

Robert Taylor
smuso@core.com

Robert, whenever a First has a role in a book the possibility exists that there may be contact with Elysia down the road. Similarly, there was a very good reason for Sam and Sephie to meet, and that may also hold true for other Sigil-Bearers in the future. I can promise you, though, that if characters from different books are ever seen together, it will be because it is necessary for the development of the over-arching story, not to boost sales or force people to buy a book they wouldn't otherwise read. We'll always stay true to our commitment that a fan can get the whole story he needs complete in one book.

Dear MysSpellings,

As always, MYSTIC continues to be great and I couldn't be happier. The story's heading in a good direction and all the artists' efforts continue to cast their spell.

Unfortunately, something still bothers me. Why is it that there isn't any MYSTIC/CrossGen merchandise? We've all seen time and again that CrossGen is a force to be reckoned with in the comic book industry, so why not branch out? Action figures, video games, trading cards and motion pictures offer CrossGen countless possibilities for its worlds and characters. Wouldn't you want to have an Ethan action figure accompanied by Skink, or see Cameron Diaz cast as Giselle on a made-for-TV movie? I can at least speak for myself when I say I would. I believe that I speak for all your readers when I say that CrossGen is too big and too wonderful to hide out in comic books alone.

With many thanks, always,
Mikael Sebag
Stormwrecker@hotmail.com

I couldn't agree with you more, Mikael, and we're working on all the things you've mentioned, and more. Statues of Arwyn and Kreeg from SOJOURN and Ashleigh and a Lesser Races companion from SCION have already been completed. Both will be available soon at your local comic store, or the CrossGen Mall. How's that for service?

Dear Giselle:

In issue #24 Animora has transformed to her former exquisite beauty, yet still maintains that wicked aura about her. What is amazing in this story is that the sigil on the palm of Giselle is now a double-edged weapon because Giselle was infected with the Demon Queen's own dark intent, and that all of Giselle's Guild Spirits have now abandoned her, as they feel she has been tainted.

The raging battle, with Ingra bragging that she does not fear Giselle, reinforces Ingra's reference to herself as the "Mother of Furies." Giselle's confusion when she comes out of her trance and calls for the spirits who no longer support her is also well done, and the excitement is tremendous when Ingra actually does face off with Animora. When Ingra says that she is the ocean and that Animora is the river, the comparison really makes you think – just how powerful is Ingra? This is truly a spectacular story! It's just that damn good!

Paul Dale Roberts
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Ingra is one of the most powerful of the First, Paul, and if she had wanted to destroy Giselle, she likely could have done so easily. That she didn't probably points more to the fact that she has some nefarious plan in mind for 'Elle rather than that she's going soft. More importantly, this issue marks a turning point for Giselle, as she realizes that she has more to learn from the Guild Spirits than simply magic. It's about time our girl started growing up, eh?

via snail mail:
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letters@crossgen.com
MYSTIC (in the subject line)



THIS
TOWN DOESN'T
NEED YOU
ANYMORE!